Mr. Speaker, I rise because what the gentleman

from North Carolina (Mr. Price), my friend, has said is terribly

important to be said. And what is even more important is that it be

made available to the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is important, appropriate, to inform the

gentleman and the rest of the Congress who may not be aware that the

elements of the strategy for success, the identical language which the

minority leader, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. Pelosi), has

requested in the form of an amendment, has actually been included in an

appropriations bill, the Iraq supplemental appropriations bill, passed

earlier this year.

That language was included in an amendment that I submitted to the

Iraq supplemental bill. It also included the benchmarks that the

gentleman has suggested, as well as even more specific information. We

have received that report on the strategy for success, Mr. Speaker.

The most important elements of that report, in fact though, were

included in an addendum which was classified. And so I and those who

have seen the report are not at liberty to give the kind of specific

information that at least I feel should be shared with the American

public.

But I would like to address what was in the body of the report, which

does in part respond to the very specific questions, as to Iraq's

military capability, its economic viability, and its political

stability.

The American people need to know whether in fact Iraq will ever be

able to fully control its borders and provide security for its society

and its economy. And we need to know how successful we have been in

training and equipping Iraqi forces, because we have been working at

that for more than 2 years.

The American people also need to know what has happened to the tens

of billions of dollars that we have appropriated for economic

reconstruction.

Will Iraq ever be or is even close to being economically viable? Is

its physical infrastructure in place so that its economy can rebound in

a way that will provide economic opportunities for its population?

The American people also need to know, in addition to where Iraq is

in terms of military capabilities and economic viability, how stable

its government can ever be and at what point will the decision makers,

the policymakers in Washington decide that its governance is stable

enough to be able to return Iraq over to a democracy that is worthy of

our military efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this war. I voted against it. I voted against

most of the funding for it. I did vote for the Iraq supplemental

because it included this language that I felt was vitally important,

requiring what, while we do not call it an exit strategy, is certainly

appropriately entitled ``a strategy for success.'' That language was

included and could only have been included if it was offered in a

bipartisan, nonpolitical context, without a whole lot of fanfare. But

working with the majority we could get some answers to the questions

that the American people, our constituents, are asking. We did not have

those questions answered when we went to war.

I opposed the war because I felt that it was unjustified. I knew that

Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with the attacks on 9/11. Suggestions

to the contrary were a ruse. The reasons given were at best

unjustified; at worst, deliberately deceptive.

I also opposed it because as our senior military officers will tell

you we ought not go to war without a plan to win the peace. We had no

plan to win the peace. And, in fact, the 41st President of the United

States, George Bush, when he had the opportunity to go into Baghdad and

take out Saddam when we had Saddam's Republican Guard on the run, he

chose not to do so because his advisors, understanding the country,

acting with foresight and knowledge of the political context within the

Middle East, were afraid that we would be thrust into the role of an

occupier. And they knew, and I think were absolutely right, that the

United States should never be playing the role of an occupier, but

always that of a liberator. So they chose not to go to Baghdad. The son

chose differently with very different people advising him, and I think

for different reasons.

But now that we are in Iraq, what do we do? That is what senior

military officers are asking us. And it is certainly what the mothers

and fathers of the young men and women who are fighting this war are

demanding to know. They need to know what is our strategy. How long

will we be there? How much more money is absolutely necessary to

continue this military engagement? And they are getting none of those

answers.

Unfortunately, I cannot disclose any of the specific information that

has now been provided, but I certainly can share, at least with my

constituents, the fact that in my judgment we are nowhere near being

able to withdraw a substantial number of our troops in a responsible

manner because, in my judgment, the Iraqi military is nowhere near

being able to secure its borders. The Iraqi police forces are nowhere

near being able to restore law and order in that country. The economic

infrastructure is nowhere near being able to support a viable economy.

And even the government is nowhere near being able to pass a

Constitution that not just would be acceptable to the American people

who have sacrificed so much to bring it about, but it is not even in

the situation where it would be enduring and accepted by the vast

majority of the Iraqi people.

Mr. Speaker, we are in a quagmire here. We need answers. We need

answers from the people who put us in that quagmire. It is wrong to

continue to be sending troops to a war that is this unwinnable, Mr.

Speaker.

Now, I suspect what is going to happen, and it was further confirmed

yesterday by the Secretary and by some of the senior military officers

who have been in a consultation with them, that we will start a

substantial withdrawal. But I think that withdrawal, I feel that

withdrawal will be motivated more for political reasons than for

military or foreign policy reasons. We have our fist in the middle of a

beehive, and we are getting stung. The advisors that sent us there are

not getting stung because they figure they can say or do anything

to avoid repercussions and accountability. But, boy, our young men and

women are being stung every day.

We need to figure out how to extricate in a way that is responsible

and will justify their sacrifice. We cannot cut and run. And yet the

gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Murtha), one of the most respected

Members of the House, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Defense

of the Committee on Appropriations, is afraid and, in fact, predicts

that is what we will do, and we will do it for political reasons, not

for substantive policy reasons.

We need to get more countries involved in a real way, not in a way so

that with a few troops they can list their participation. We need to go

through international bodies like the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization, NATO. We need to work with the United Nations, which we

continue to bash and beat up on and scapegoat for our own problems in

terms of our credibility throughout the world. We need to get the rest

of the world involved because the rest of the world had a stake here in

getting rid of a ruthless dictator, in restoring stability in Iraq, in

giving Iraq some ability to seize control of its own destiny, but in a

way that it chooses. That is what we should be about.

We should not be about, in my estimate, spending hundreds of millions

of dollars to build an American Embassy in Baghdad that only serves to

confirm what our enemies are telling their recruits, that we are there

for the long run; that we are there as occupiers; that we are there to

take advantage of their oil reserves; to exploit Iraq's resources, and

to exploit its people for our own political purposes. They are wrong,

but we have to prove that they are wrong.

We have to show the world that we have a strategy for success, a

responsible one. It will leave Iraq in better shape than before we

entered it. We never, as I said, should have entered, but now we have a

responsibility to fix it before we leave. And that strategy for

success, as I say, Mr. Speaker, is not going to be achieved

unilaterally. It is going to have to be achieved by working with the

rest of the world in an international context, letting the Iraqi people

control their own destiny, not dictating to them.

As much as I would love for us to hand them a Constitution that made

us feel good about what we have accomplished, I do not think that is

going to work. They have to own that Constitution. I pray to God that

they will not exclude women, that they will not continue some of the

arcane habits, the laws and the regulations that only serve to support

religious clerics and a very conservative, even extremist in some

cases, religious system of governance, but, in fact, will open it up to

a true democracy where both men and women can fully participate a free

enterprise, an uncorrupted economy, and, in fact, a strong military and

police force that will provide the security to the Iraqi people that

they have not had in generations.

That has got to be our objective. We cannot achieve it on our own. We

have got to work with the rest of the world. We have got to sit down

and maybe even eat a little humble pie and come up with an

international solution for this, and to not require our soldiers to

bear the brunt of the injuries and the death that they have.

Changing Iraq's leadership was more in the interest of so many other

countries than it was in America's interest. We went because we had the

ability to go, and I am afraid there was some political motivation

involved as well. But now that we are there, we in the Congress need to

require of the executive branch that they give us the answers, that

they share with us and then to the American people, they need to share

with the American people what is their plan, what is their strategy for

success. And if they do not do that, there will be political

accountability as there ought to be.

Mr. Speaker, the report that we received 2 weeks late, but that we

did finally receive 2 weeks ago, is an important first step, but it is

grossly inadequate. The language that I put in the appropriations bill

several months ago required a 90-day update. Every one of those updates

needs to be more specific, needs to be fleshed out better than the

prior reports. And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it needs to be shared

with the American public. It is their money. It is their sons and

daughters. That is what this war, unfortunately, is about, from their

standpoint.

How do you make this worth the effort? How do you succeed in a way

that their sons and daughters can be proud of what they contributed and

the risk they undertook? The administration owes that to them. We will

continue to insist that it provides that information, not in a

classified document that can be kept from the public's eyes and ears,

but within a spirit of full disclosure. And if they do not have a plan

that will work, they need to come up with one.

They need to consult with the rest of the world, be willing to work

with the legislative branch, with our other allies and even those we do

not consider allies. It is in this planet's interest to bring about a

free world, a safe world for its future generations.

So I ask the administration that has been twice elected to do the

right thing, to get us out of Iraq, but to get us out in a way that we

can turn back knowing that we have accomplished something that was

deserving of the sacrifice, the loss, the risk that our best young men

and women have been willing to undertake.